

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SÁMI AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN NORWAY

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this chapter is to introduce Norway's inclusive education policies for two separate school systems: the national Norwegian and the Sámi systems. This chapter is based on research done in Norway on its national and Sámi schools and their curricula. Norway is an interesting example when it comes to indigenous education and national schools, as state policies on diversity and minority and indigenous issues have been consciously implemented in both school systems. The evolution of these guidelines, as written in education curricula and as implemented in practice, is the core focus of this article. This chapter aims to describe and contemplate the overarching and general tendencies of Sámi schools and issues in Norway, which have received little scholarly attention. We build on and add to the existing research by combining issues related to the national, or mainstream, school systems with issues related to the Sámi school systems. We will present

historical and political perspectives on these inclusive school systems. First, we will look at how Sámi subject matters have been introduced into curricula in national schools and kindergartens and what is practically meant by incorporating the Sámi contents. Second, the general educational inclusiveness and cultural inclusiveness practiced in Sámi schools will be examined.

Keywords: inclusiveness, Norwegian school and curriculum, Sámi school, Sámi education

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we discuss Norway's inclusive education policies from political and historical perspectives. In Norway, there are national (or majority) and Sámi school systems and curricula. We are interested in inclusiveness at both national and Sámi schools in Norway. We will investigate this issue by examining the approaches to Sámi culture and language in the curricula used by national and Sámi schools.

The Sámi are an indigenous people who live in four countries: Norway, Finland, Sweden and Russia. They originated in Siberia (Lamnidis et al., 2018) and their language belongs to the Finno-Ugric language family (Aikio, 2012). Sámi schools in Norway refer to school systems in Sámi-language administrative districts where the Sámi curriculum is applied. The Sámi schools and curriculum were established in 1997. Sámi schools are meant for all pupils who live in Sámi-language administrative districts, including non-Sámi pupils; all public schools in Sámi language districts follow the Sámi curriculum. Schools or individual classrooms outside the Sámi language districts can choose to follow the Sámi curriculum as well. In practice, Sámi schools operate in a pluralist multilingual context and therefore employ Sámi-speaking, Norwegian-speaking and bilingual education. Decisions regarding the school-specific linguistic and political aspects of Norway's inclusive education policies are made locally (Keskitalo, 2010; Keskitalo & Määttä, 2011; Keskitalo, Määttä, & Uusiautti, 2013), such as when determining which language should be used in a particular school or class.

The opportunity to learn about indigenous peoples' own history, culture and language in a culturally appropriate manner is embedded in international law, most

notably in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (International Labour Organization Convention, known as ILO-convention 169) and the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). One important aspect of indigenous education is capacity-building in indigenous languages, which are important indexes of belonging. Thus, one of the core goals of indigenous education is to contribute to mother-tongue use and the revitalization of languages (Smith, 1999).

The mainstreaming of state education in indigenous issues is understood as education about indigenous histories, cultures and societies within the framework of the general educational system to increase knowledge of indigenous realities among majority students. With regard to studies of mass media, mainstreaming concerns reaching a broader audience. From this perspective, and with reference to media theory, we argue that national curricula are ways of mediating states' desires to set the content of education agendas (Østbye, 2009). As we will show in our analysis of the Norwegian educational context, Sámi issues are relevant to mainstreaming and indigenous education. The present chapter is based on the authors' research, which was conducted in Sámi and national primary school systems, as well as the curricula of these school systems (e.g. Andreassen & Olsen 2017; Keskitalo, 2010, 2018; Olsen & Andreassen, 2016, 2017, 2018; Olsen, Sollid & Johansen, 2017). These ideas are further constructed in this chapter.

THE ETHNIC AND NATIONAL AWAKENING OF THE SÁMI

The ethnic and national emergence of the Sámi people started in the late 1800s, leading to the founding of the first local Sámi associations and press. The Nordic Sámi Council was established in 1956, and a renaissance of the Sámi culture took place in the late 1960s, as more Sámi associations were formed. This awakening, after a long period of assimilation, was prompted by nationalism, as living conditions were becoming poor for the Sámi. Sámi language instruction in the primary school system was launched in the 1970s, and the Sámi Parliament in Finland was established in 1972. Further, in the 1970s, the Sámi were amongst the indigenous peoples from many parts of the world who took part in the first wave of international indigenism. This was an important predecessor to later international conventions and organizations (Lehtola, 2005; The Sámi Parliament, 2008).

On the Norwegian side of the Sámi area (called 'Sápmi' in the North Sámi language), the Alta case (1979–1981), which concerned the building of a power dam in a Sámi area, led to huge protests from environmentalists and Sámi activists. In the aftermath of this conflict, major changes were made in Norway. In the decades following the Alta conflict, Norway went through a rather radical change in its politics towards the indigenous Sámi and other minorities. The Sámi Act of 1987 made Sámi an official language in Norway. The Sámi Article was introduced into the Norwegian Constitution in 1988, stating that Norway is obligated to ensure that the Sámi people can keep and develop their language, culture and society. The Norwegian Sámi Parliament opened in 1989. The following year Norway ratified ILO-convention 169 on the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples, thereby recognizing the Sámi as an indigenous people. Of the countries with a Sámi population, to date Norway is the only one which has ratified the ILO's 169 agreement on indigenous peoples. Lastly, in 1999, Norway ratified the European Council's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, announcing official minority status for Forest Finns, Kvens/Norwegian Finns, Roma peoples and Jews.

The Sámi parliaments in Norway, Sweden and Finland serve as the authoritative advisory agencies on issues regarding the Sámi people. These parliaments have legal statuses in their respective national law systems and executive political and authoritative power within their mandate. These texts are called Sámi law in Norway (Ráđđehus, 2018), the Sámi Parliament Act in Finland (Finlex, 2018) and Sámi Parliament Act in Sweden (Sveriges riksdag, 2018). The purpose of the Sámi parliaments in Nordic countries is to address Sámi language, culture and issues regarding the Sámi's position as an indigenous people. Research has brought to light problems regarding the subject of Sámi cultural self-determination (e.g. Guttorm, 2018).

THE SÁMI CURRICULUM AND SÁMI SCHOOLS

In Scandinavia, curriculum development was connected to Christianity; church and education matters were led by missionaries until the mid-nineteenth century (Lund, 2014). Since then, a long period of Norwegianization was officially carried out by the Norwegian government which emphasised the assimilation of the Sámi people (Minde, 2005). Norwegianization is a term used to describe more than 100 years of

assimilation policy directed towards all minorities. In Sámi areas, Norwegianization led to a thorough change of Sámi communities. Many Sámi, especially—but not exclusively—those along the coast, changed both their language and their ethnic identity and ‘became’ Norwegians.

In Norway, many types of elementary school curricula have been used since 1858 (Gundem, 1990; Hiim & Hippe, 1998), highlighting national educational aims. Much later, in 1997, a separate Sámi school system was established for the first time with a standardised Sámi curriculum which promoted the teaching of Sámi cultural and multicultural elements and the use of Sámi pedagogies. This occurred as a joint political effort between the Sámi community, politicians and parents; it was supported by the Norwegian government and the Norwegian Sámi parliament and was administrated by the Sámi language district municipalities. The Sámi school systems, located in the Sámi-language administrative districts in Norway, follow the principles of the Sámi curriculum, and the status of the Sámi curriculum is equal to that of the national curriculum. The bilingual Sámi curriculum, written in Sámi and Norwegian, overlaps in many sections with the national curriculum. The implementation of Sámi schools and the Sámi curriculum varies as the areas where they have been instituted are home to multiple cultures (Keskitalo, 2010).

Sámi pedagogy has been developed alongside Sámi education, Sámi teacher education and Sámi studies and research. It is based on traditional childrearing practices and is implemented as institutionalized school knowledge (see Balto, 1997). The creation of the separate Sámi school and Sámi kindergarten systems necessitated the further development of the Sámi pedagogy, according to Sámi philosophy, worldview, values and traditional knowledge. Fixing some single educational issues was not enough to strengthen the Sámi pedagogy; solutions to wider issues must still be found, including language planning, development of culturally meaningful pedagogy, producing educated Sámi speaking teachers, etc.

After a long period of assimilation, Sámi education aims to revitalize the nine Sámi languages and multiple local cultures and increase the number of active Sámi speakers. Overall, large-scale language revitalization has been occurring in Norway for decades at kindergartens, schools, adult education centres and cultural associations. Moreover, this is also a political goal, which is supported at the state and municipal levels (Ođasmahttin-, hálddahus- ja girkodepartemeanta, 2011). The

current (and soon to be replaced) Norwegian national curriculum (*Kunnskapsløftet*) and the second version of the Sámi curriculum (*Máhttolokten*) first took effect in 1997 (Keskitalo, 2010) and was revised for the 2006–2007 academic year (Øzerk, 2006). A third primary-school Sámi reform effort is currently underway. The first Sámi primary school teacher education reform effort was launched in 2010 and the second in 2016.

The radical multicultural principle of inclusion—which mandates the Sámi curriculum for all—has been in use in the Norwegian Sámi language administrative districts since 1997 and applies to children who attend municipal schools. Thus, it has a 21-year-long history at the municipal level. According to the principle of inclusion, pupils living in Sámi-language administrative districts must attend Sámi municipal schools, regardless of their ethnic or linguistic backgrounds. Some municipalities even put all pupils in Sámi-language classes, despite their respective backgrounds. The idea is to respect the indigenous people and the languages of the region and build cultural sovereignty between ethnic groups and in society.

Currently, three types of Sámi schools and models for using and studying the Sámi language exist in the Sámi language administrative districts: (1) Norwegian-speaking schools where the Sámi language is studied as a second language; (2) Sámi-speaking schools; and (3) bilingual schools with Sámi and Norwegian classes. In all schools in Norway pupils study many languages, starting in first grade, and approximately 3.5 hours per week is allocated for studying their mother tongue (Keskitalo, 2010). Students at Sámi schools may identify either Norwegian or Sámi as their mother tongue. Other mother tongues of individual students are studied as foreign languages. New time regulations are currently being evaluated in relation to upcoming reforms in Norway.

EXPLORATION OF NORWEGIAN MAJORITY SCHOOLS AND CORE CURRICULA

In 1974, Norway created its first official national curriculum. Updated versions of the national curriculum were established in 1987, 1994, 1997 (along with Norway's first Sámi curriculum) and 2006. In 2017, a new core curriculum was approved, with a completely new curriculum expected in 2020. Each curriculum has had a

core focus based on an ideological and value-based foundation. Thus, it is highly relevant to know the state's official policies and ideas on different issues. As an ideological text, a core curriculum reflects society and social changes. This section examines the curricular representation of Sámi issues in the core curricula and how this has changed over the years.

The preface of the 1974 curriculum provides insight into the creation of the curriculum, stating that issues related to Sámi society were discussed at the top national level 'in accordance with wishes stated in the Parliament and elsewhere, the part on Sami culture and history has been strengthened all the way through the curriculum' (Ministry of Church and Education, 1974, p. 4; authors' translation). This can be seen as a change in the political climate regarding Sámi issues. When referring to Sámi issues, the 1974 curriculum mainly described Sámi students as living and attending school in 'mixed language districts' (1974, p. 18). This phrasing could potentially cover students from several groups, but the context indicates that it concerned Sámi students. In the text, the situation for these students was described as challenging on several levels. Many students had to live in boarding schools, they were not used to books and some were more afraid of using two languages than other students; school was described as a key arena to face these challenges (Ministry of Church and Education, 1974, p. 18).

Throughout the 1974 curriculum, Sámi issues were mainly related to the situation of Sámi students in school. The curriculum included very little about the need for majority students to learn about Sámi issues—with one exception. In the social studies syllabus for year 8, it is stated at one point that students should learn about generational conflicts in Sámi homes caused by the Norwegianization of young Sámi (Ministry of Church and Education, 1974, p. 186). This rather specific statement is interesting, both because it is stated as something which is relevant for all students in Norway and because it acknowledges the bigger narrative of Norwegianization and its effects (Folkenborg, 2008, p. 45).

Between 1974 and 1987, Norwegian society went through significant changes, especially with the rise of the oil-based economy and the increasing number of immigrants and refugees arriving in Norway. In the 1980s, the Norwegian school system underwent a massive overhaul to better reflect Norway's changing society. As part of this, a new curriculum was implemented in 1987. The new curriculum

reflected these changes and was intended to lead to pluralist integration, an approach clearly enabled by the increasingly diverse society (Engen, 2010).

The 1987 curriculum maintained a strong focus on Sámi students and their right to be taught Sámi language and culture, and the Norwegian school was said to have a particular responsibility to take care of language and traditions. The curriculum prompted a new curricular focus on mainstreaming, stating that all students in Norwegian schools should be taught about Sámi culture (Olsen & Andreassen, 2018). As part of this emphasis on Sámi issues, the core 1987 curriculum included a chapter on Sámi issues. This curriculum provided a new level of recognition of the Sámi within the curricular context, stating that 'the Sámi hold a special position amongst the ethnic minorities of our land' (Ministry of Church and Education, 1987, p. 18). This statement has three main elements: first, it confirms there are several 'ethnic minorities' in Norway; second, it asserts that the Sámi 'hold a special position' amongst these minorities; and third, the Sámi are seen as an ethnic minority, which implies that the Sámi are not to be recognized as an indigenous people but as a minority within Norwegian society.

The 1987 curriculum described the presence of several ethnic groups in Norway, stating that Norwegian society is part of a global community. In the description of Norwegian heritage, the curriculum states that minority groups need to have a place in schools (1987, p. 22). 'Ethnic minority' is a key phrase here, and it includes groups which have since been nationally labelled as indigenous people, national minorities and cultural minorities. At the same time, the concept of 'language minorities' is still in use, alongside the term 'immigrant', demonstrating that categories at work both include the Sámi and cover non-Sámi minorities.

The 1987 curriculum used the term 'immigrants' to replace 'alien workers', which had been used in the 1974 curriculum. In considering this change, the 1987 curriculum employed a resource perspective (Olsen & Andreassen, 2018). The text stated that those coming from other cultures and other parts of the world could teach something important about other peoples and cultures (1987, p. 22). Thus, 'immigrant students' were presented as a resource which could serve the common good. Furthermore, this implied an important distinction between 'us' and 'the others', i.e. between the Norwegian community and those coming from the outside. Immigrant

students, despite being part of the school system, were not fully included in the curricular version of the Norwegian community in 1987.

The 1987 curriculum, with its emphasis on others coming from both outside and within state borders, is an outspoken text regarding 'othering'. Othering implies presenting one group of people as fundamentally different than another. As a process or strategy, it implies the reproduction and accumulation of power structures (Moreton-Robinson, 2000). When a curriculum others different minority groups, it is a powerful expression of the hegemonic discourse of a state struggling with what to do with diversity (Olsen & Andreassen, 2018).

The 1990s also included curricular reform. A new core curriculum was introduced in 1993 and became the core for the upper secondary (1994) and primary school curricula for all national schools (Ministry of Education, 1997). The text was a highly ideological document with an ambitious style. The seven parts of the document all referred to a 'human type', e.g. 'a meaning-seeking human', and examined different dimensions of Norwegian schools and society.

An interesting parallel to this, which also involves Sámi students, is found in the 1995 Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculum. This curriculum expressed a similar kind of resource perspective but added that the Sámi, with their experience of being a minority population, should have a particular responsibility towards the integration of new minorities (Olsen & Andreassen, 2016). Following this logic, the Sámi, being a suppressed minority, know something about being a minority from which other minorities could learn.

Sámi issues were mentioned in one of the seven parts, called 'the spiritual human being'. Here, Sámi language and culture were designated as parts of Norway's shared national heritage. Later, mainstreaming was repeated, stating that all primary school students should have knowledge about Sámi culture and society.

In 1997, a new national primary school curriculum was launched. The 1993 text was the core of this curriculum, as it would also be for the 2006 curriculum. In the 1990s, the most noticeable change regarding Sámi was the creation of a national Sámi curriculum in 1997. This was to be used by Sámi schools and students—that is, schools in municipalities within the Sámi language administrative districts.

This was a major step for the recognition of Sámi rights and of great symbolic importance. However, it is unclear whether this led to the omission of some Sámi-related content in the majority school curriculum. Gjerpe (2017) argued that the majority curriculum seemed to have less about Sámi issues than expected, given that the Sámi curriculum was launched simultaneously. For the most part it follows the same structure as the 1987 curriculum.

In the mainstream national curriculum of 1997, which was basically the 1993 core with a small addition, the words used about Norway's diverse society were changed from those used in 1987. Instead of 'immigrants', the 1993/1997 curriculum spoke of 'Norwegians with a different cultural background' (1997, p. 57). In addition, the term 'diversity' entered the policy vocabulary, reflecting a change to a more descriptive and less normative perspective. Thus, the resource dimension is downplayed. The Sámi are no longer talked of as a resource for the Norwegian society. They seem to be presented more as citizens in (more or less) the same terms as the other inhabitants of the state.

As mentioned, Norway ratified the European Council's Convention on the Protection of the Rights of National Minorities in 1999. This was reflected in the curriculum; however, it took some time. When the 2006 curriculum was launched, neither 'indigenous people' nor 'national minorities' were found in the short introduction added to the existing 1993 core curriculum. Thus, we will not dwell on 2006 for long—only long enough to note the continuing tendency to focus on cultural diversity and a multicultural society.

THE NEW CURRICULUM

In 2017, Norway launched a new core curriculum as the first step in a process leading to the complete makeover of the national curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2017). Here, the groundwork and the principles of the revised curriculum were laid out in a language and style quite different from its 1993 predecessor. The most remarkable change from previous curricula, from our point of view, was the way the Sámi and minorities were described and categorized. For the first time in the

¹ The Early Childhood Education curriculum stated this back in 2006.

core of a national school curriculum, the Sámi were explicitly recognized as an indigenous people with special rights, as stated in the ILO-convention 169 and the Norwegian Constitution.¹ In addition, for the first time, national minorities were recognized as such on a curricular level.

The Sámi's status as an indigenous people was expressed and implied in several places in the core curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2017). Per the curriculum, the Sámi culture is part of Norway's national heritage and the Norwegian Constitution secures the rights of the Sámi to maintain and develop their language, culture and society (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 4-5). Furthermore, the curriculum included a mainstreaming perspective, stating that, through schooling, students should receive insight into and knowledge about the diverse history, culture, knowledge and rights of the indigenous Sámi people (2017, p. 6). This is quite an expansion of the goals set by earlier national core curricula. An expanded citizenship dimension was also presented in the curriculum with regard to the teaching of democracy: 'A democratic society also defends indigenous peoples and minorities. An indigenous perspective is a part of what students should learn about democracy' (2017, p. 9). This last statement implies moving from a goal of knowledge to one of perspective. It is a lofty ambition; all students of the Norwegian school systems, regardless of where they go to school, should receive knowledge about the Sámi, as well as the ability to see and understand society from the position and viewpoint of an indigenous people.

In the current literature on schools and teacher competence, the term 'diversity competence' has recently been introduced (Røthing, 2016). This relates to an emphasis on diversity and community/unity, as well as the balance between integration and recognition. Røthing (2016) argued that diversity covers a wide array of social categories and that diversity competence must include knowledge, skills and attitudes related to complexity, including the ability to see and recognize it. This is a potential means of avoiding various types of othering.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the tendency in the Norwegian educational system and Norwegian education policy is to try to create the potential for the recognition and integration of

indigenous peoples and minorities (Seland, 2013). The rights and specific situations of special groups in a society call for recognition, which can imply special measures and strategies for some groups over than others. At the same time, the demand for school to be an integrative force which creates coherence and unity calls for school systems which provide the same education for all, regardless of cultural differences (Olsen & Andreassen, 2018).

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